The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania: Commission recommends opening accession negotiations

"A step forward today for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania is a step forward for the entire Western Balkans region. The work on reforms and modernisation however needs to continue, in the interest of the partners and the European Union," said the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini who together with Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn presented the annual Enlargement Package in the European Parliament in Strasbourg today.

The European Commission adopted today its annual Enlargement Package, including seven individual
reports, assessing the implementation of the European Union's enlargement policy which is based on established criteria and fair and rigorous conditionality. “The European Union Enlargement is an investment in peace, security, prosperity and stability in Europe. And it is in our own interest to have a successful enlargement policy,” Mogherini said, welcoming the progress made by the Western Balkans partners.

She informed that the European Commission recommended that the Council decides to open accession negotiations with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania in light of progress achieved, maintaining and deepening the current reform momentum. To support this, the Commission would apply the reinforced approach for the negotiating chapters on judiciary and fundamental rights and justice, freedom and security.

Additionally, the European Commission is also working towards an opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application and with the Kosovo authorities cooperation persists on the basis of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The EU will also continue to facilitate the dialogue on normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina including on the achievement of a legally binding agreement.

Mogherini further highlighted the need for continued reforms in particular in fundamental areas of the rule of law, human rights, democratic institutions and public administration as well as on economic development and competitiveness. “Countries must ensure that the reforms are properly implemented and that they demonstrate a track record of concrete results, not because Brussels asks, but because this is what the people of the region, the citizens, are expecting from their institutions and their leaderships.”

Federica Mogherini emphasised the EU's clear engagement and commitment to the region as a whole, the six partners and the perspective of the enlargement process. She will travel to the Western Balkans from 17 to 19 April and visit Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

For detailed findings and recommendations see:

Strategy Paper:

Montenegro:

Serbia:

Turkey:

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

Albania:

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Kosovo:
Economic Reform Programmes for the Western Balkan countries and Turkey:

See also

Press release: Enlargement package: Commission publishes reports on the Western Balkans partners and Turkey
Remarks by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the College read-out to present the 2018 Enlargement package
www.eeas.europa.eu

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